

**Lieutenant Governor
Joseph E. Kernan, Director**
INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
ONE NORTH CAPITOL, SUITE 700
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204
TEL 317 232 8800
www.indianacommerce.com

For Immediate Release: March 13, 2003

For More Information Contact: Jeff Harris, Indiana Dept. of Commerce, 317.232.2464

Commerce Assist Coachmen Recreational Vehicles to Expand in Middlebury; 150 New Jobs Created

INDIANAPOLIS—One of the nation's leading recreational vehicle manufactures will expand its Middlebury, Ind. facilities, Lt. Governor Joe Kernan announced today.

Middlebury's Coachmen Recreational Vehicle Co., LLC will invest approximately \$4.6 million to construct a new 127,000 square foot motorhome plant at its existing complex located at 423 North Main. The move retains 200 existing positions and will lead to the creation of 150 new, full-time jobs.

"We couldn't be more pleased with Coachmen's decision to expand here in northern Indiana," said Kernan, who leads the state's economic development efforts, serving as the director of the Indiana Department of Commerce. "We have a healthy relationship, and a long and legendary history with the industry. So, this decision makes a lot of sense for not only Coachmen, but for Indiana as well. We are thankful for the partnership between the company, the town of Middlebury and the Department of Commerce that helped to make this happen."

Coachmen already broke ground in Middlebury on the state-of-the-art motorhome plant, which is expected to be in operation by early August. It will be Coachmen's largest RV plant, and also the company's first to feature two assembly lines. Utilizing two assembly lines will increase production efficiencies by segregating higher production-hour models from lower production-hour models. The new plant also features over 24,000-square-feet of mezzanines for offline manufacturing processes, such as assembling cabinets, kitchen units and other modules, providing improved material flow and manufacturing processes. Cranes will lower finished sections for installation in the motorhomes.

"Coachmen RV Company has a storied history. It's one of the most recognized brand names in the industry, and our rich history is made up of many special people and relationships that we've built upon over the years. These relationships that we so deeply value include our employees, our customers, our suppliers and, equally important, the communities in which we operate. The town of Middlebury and the state of Indiana are very much a part of Coachmen RV, and we value the strong relationships we have with both the state and the town. We look forward to the continued growth of these relationships as we work together in building upon the great legacy of Coachmen for years to come, contributing to the best long term interests of the Middlebury community and the state of Indiana," commented Michael R. Terlep, President of Coachmen RV Company.

Coachmen/ add 1

Founded in 1964, Coachmen RV Co. designs and markets travel trailers, fifth wheel trailers and class A and class C motor homes and is a subsidiary of Elkhart, Indiana-based Coachmen Industries, Inc. Today Coachmen RV Company has more than 1,550 employees and operates plants in both Indiana and Georgia. Coachmen Industries has more than 4,000 employees and in addition to the plants in Indiana and Georgia, operates manufacturing facilities in Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Vermont and Virginia.

Competing with Illinois for the project the state offered an aggressive incentive package. The Indiana Department of Commerce offered \$135,500 from its Skills Enhancement Fund (SEF) to assist training new and existing employees in skills required by the expansion and up to \$1.6 million in income tax credits from the Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE) program.

The Indiana Department of Commerce awards Skills Enhancement Fund grants to Indiana companies that undertake capital investment projects. The grants help defray the costs of training new and current employees in transferable and company-specific skills necessary to support these projects.

Companies interested in these or other Commerce programs should contact the Indiana Department of Commerce's Business Development Division at 800.463.8081 or access its Web site at www.indianacommerce.com.

###